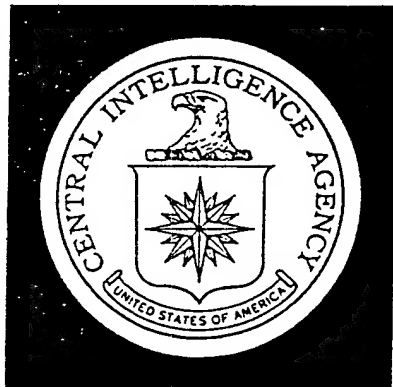


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

THE SITUATION IN GREECE

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
6 July 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Greece

1. The eleven-week-old military regime in Athens remains firmly in command. Close on the heels of the bloodless take-over, the junta--under the leadership of Col. Georgios Papadopoulos--moved to establish complete control of all aspects of the government. In carrying out its professed aims of completely purging all Greek institutions of any semblance of the former archaic, corrupt, and "inefficient forces of the status quo," the junta installed supporters in the military high command and all key governmental and bureaucratic posts. This process is continuing. The civilian premier and foreign minister are mere figureheads.

2. Political life has been sharply proscribed. Persons making antiregime statements are subject to severe punishment by the military courts. Many of the former political leaders originally arrested have now been released, but are either under house arrest or are being closely watched. Andreas Papandreou, who the junta feared would turn an expected electoral victory into a decided swing to the political left and an eventual break in the country's long-standing ties with the West, remains in an Athens prison awaiting trial on charges of treason. Of the more than 6,000 suspect Communists originally arrested, over 2,500 are still at an island detention center. Strict control of the domestic press is maintained, and all newspapers reflect the same proregime line.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA for the use of the CIA representative on the Inter-departmental Regional Group, Middle East. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated with the Office of National Estimates and the Clandestine Services.

3. Some progress has been made toward one of the junta's major aims, that of revising the constitution. A constitutional review commission has been meeting since 20 June and has been instructed to finish its draft for approval by the junta by mid-December. No timetable has yet been set for the announced referendum by the people. Although the commission was directed not to alter the basic institutions of the state (i.e., the crowned democracy) the junta has suggested that the commission consider, inter alia, a provision requiring a popularly elected prime minister. This strongly suggests the junta desires a considerable limitation of the palace's previous political authority which, as a matter of fact, has been a contentious issue several times in Greece's modern history.

4. In short, the regime shows no evidence of deviating from its professed aims of "cleansing" the country's institutions until the "revolution has completed its tasks." The junta's vision of a purified political and social atmosphere may be unrealistic and its capability to realize it may be doubtful, but its resolve to see it through is firm and so far unquestioned.

5. Most of the elements best able to resist the take-over were almost immediately immobilized. The general public reaction to the events of 21 April, allowing for the initial period of shock at the speed with which they took place, appeared to be acceptance of the junta's explanation of the necessity for the coup--the removal of the "corrupt" politicians, who for so long had impeded the growth of progressive government in Greece. Popular tolerance and even satisfaction in the new government exist, even if more a matter of relief at being rid of the old than an expression of outright good will toward the new. Only sporadic instances of resistance have emerged and any effective organized opposition seems doubtful in the near future.

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6. The junta appears to face no immediate danger of a countercoup within the military. Most of the former high command and general officers, whom the junta regards as sharing--with the politicians and the palace--the responsibility for the precoup situation, have been replaced by coup activists or by officers who were in sympathy with the coup makers' objectives. The fact that promotions and retirements continue generally in line with established procedures rather than on the basis of favoritism has probably discouraged any real movement for a countercoup. In addition, awareness among the officers that a countercoup would result in bloodshed on both sides, and possibly civil war, has had a quieting effect.

7. The junta's relations with the palace continue to be strained. The King, in his isolation from the power center, has attempted to use the palace's past prestigious position vis-a-vis the military as leverage for pressing the junta into restoring military discipline and taking concrete action toward returning to constitutional government. Following a good reception by both the populace and the military during two recent visits to military establishments, the King appears confident that he could prevail if a serious confrontation with the junta should arise.

8. Actually, the King's confidence may be unwarranted. Although the colonels have capitalized on the popular acclaim for the monarch and his public cooperation with the junta in order to legitimize the regime--and will probably continue to do so in the short run--they remain suspicious of the King's motives. So far most of the points of potential conflict between the junta and the palace have involved changes in the military to which the King has had little objection. Constantine's opposition to additional purges or governmental changes, however, may at any time result in a major confrontation. The colonels have let it be known that in such an event the King will be forced to accept their plans or be asked to leave the country. In short, the King's leverage with the

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junta is slight and is likely to deteriorate as the coup leaders' control is extended.

9. Complicating the myriad problems the regime faces at home is the difficulty in gaining international acceptance. Obviously pained but apparently unswayed by the negative reaction in the West, which resulted in considerable anti-Greek dialogue in NATO and in the European Economic Community, the coup makers have repeatedly proclaimed their firm opposition to Communism, their devotion to the aims of NATO, and their hopes for continued close association with the US.

10. Their efforts aimed at the US are particularly pointed. They are eager to initiate contacts with US officials and have indicated they would accept professional outside help in dealing with the many problems they face. They reportedly believe that the US has so far failed to respond appropriately and that the US misunderstands the necessity for their take-over. The coup leaders have shown resentment over the continuing close US contact with the King. They apparently fear that the US is using the King to undermine their regime.

11. The junta members have not taken kindly to what they regard as unwarranted American interest in the welfare of their "enfant terrible," Andreas Papandreou. He has so far been treated humanely and probably will not be executed regardless of the outcome of his trial, which has not yet been scheduled.

12. The one aspect of what they regard as the "cool" US response to the regime which is most perplexing to the group is the temporary suspension of certain items of US military aid. They regard this action as a direct slap at them. They have indicated that should this policy continue, the consequent resentment would lead to anti-American reprisals and efforts to seek aid elsewhere. There is surely some element of bluster in this approach, but the threat of reprisals is unquestionably present. King Constantine, initially approving of the suspension

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of US military aid as a means whereby both he and the US might obtain needed leverage with the junta, reportedly now believes that if some overt indication that this policy is being relaxed is not soon forthcoming, a serious confrontation could arise, not only jeopardizing the already shaky position of the King, but also plaguing the development of closer US-Greek cooperation.

13. The colonels regard Greece as a bastion of strength for the West in the eastern Mediterranean, especially following the recent events in the Middle East. As a result, in addition to expecting more overt US support, the government will probably push hard for more substantial material aid from NATO, pointing to the danger of continued Soviet support for the Arabs and the increased presence of the Soviet fleet in the eastern Mediterranean. The colonels' observation of the depletion of US assets in the Middle East as a result of the Arab-Israeli war may lead them to expect new US or NATO requests for additional real estate in Greece. The government's willingness to maintain an active role in the Western defense system probably depends to a large extent on the degree to which the legitimacy of the regime is accepted by the NATO powers.

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